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# Representative Trent Van Haaften

## Will you be able to vote?

Due to new state laws, you will be required to have a valid Indiana state picture ID to vote on Election Day.



Please visit my website,  
[www.in.gov/H76](http://www.in.gov/H76), to learn more  
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cerning absentee voting.

Representative Trent Van Haaften

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Working for You



Van Haaften Votes NO on Selling Toll Road



Helping Hoosier Families



Property Tax Relief

# 2006 Session Report



# Additional Property Tax RELIEF

At the start of the 2006 session of the Indiana General Assembly, property tax relief was identified as a priority by members of both parties. When the smoke cleared, we were able to provide some relief for homeowners.



This year, about 1.5 million homeowners will receive a one-time increase in the state homestead credit from 20 to 28 percent. This credit will provide around \$100 million in property tax relief in 2006.

In 2007, the state homestead deduction will increase from \$35,000 to \$45,000 for one year only. This relief will provide an additional \$127 million in relief for homeowners.

Starting in 2008, the state will gradually phase in a cap on property tax bills at two percent of a home's value. This cap would apply to all classes of property in Indiana, starting in 2010.

While this relief is welcome, it still does not make up for the massive increases in local property taxes that were passed on to home and business owners through the biennial state budget approved in 2005 by the Republicans leading our state's government. At the time, that budget increased the burden on local property taxpayers to the tune of an estimated \$850 million.

Ample warning of impending increases was provided to those in charge and they took the easy way out with a quick fix. Although this lack of leadership was disappointing, I still have hope the General Assembly will look to our future and provide true, lasting property tax relief. After all, Hoosiers deserve such an effort.

# Major Moves Van Haaften votes **NO** on selling Toll Road

More than anything else, the 2006 session of the Indiana General Assembly will be remembered for Major Moves, the governor's program to sell the Indiana Toll Road for \$3.8 billion to a foreign group for the next 75 years.

This proposal became law, despite public opposition at a level never seen before. Citizens across this state raised many concerns, including outrage over turning a public asset over to a private company, foreign or domestic. Others expressed the belief if a private company could turn a substantial profit by operating our roads, then government should be able to do the same. Most of all, I heard your concerns about the impact of Major Moves on Interstate 69. Some of you expressed opposition to I-69, but the majority told me if it takes a toll to get I-69 built, then build it as long as the tolls are removed once the road is paid for.

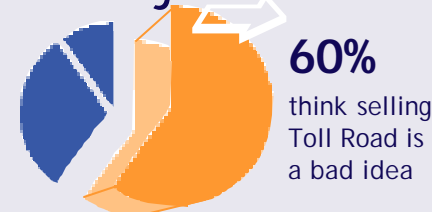
Unfortunately, I was dismayed our concerns about tolls on I-69 have been ignored. Major Moves allows the governor to select a private company, foreign or domestic, to design, build and even operate I-69 as a toll road. If a private company controls the operation of this road, you can almost guarantee tolls will never be removed.

But what outraged me the most was language inserted in the final bill by legislators from central Indiana. These efforts should make all of us question the sincerity of our state leaders to build I-69. If the road is to be a toll road, then tolls can only be collected from Evansville to Martinsville. From Martinsville to Indianapolis, the road must be a freeway. Plus, Marion County Republican legislators demanded to change the route the federal government has already thoroughly studied and approved. By changing the route selected under the watch of prior governors, these efforts by central Indiana legislators will likely delay the project.

Although these shenanigans may be viewed as "pulling one over on southwestern Indiana," I can promise you the fight to build I-69 as a freeway is not over. Although few are talking about it, Major Moves does not mandate I-69 to be a toll road. If the governor chooses, I-69 from Indianapolis to Evansville (and points beyond) can be built as a freeway and the route approved by past governors does not have to be changed.

I hope in the months ahead Governor Daniels displays the leadership necessary to place southwestern Indiana on equal ground as the rest of Indiana. Funding is and has been available for I-69 to be built as a freeway. All that is left is action to back up the words promising construction of I-69 beginning in 2008. Many of us will be watching closely for the people of southwestern Indiana to soon have the opportunity to travel toll-free to our capitol as every other Hoosier enjoys.

## Hoosiers Voice Opposition to Major Moves



Source: Indianapolis Star statewide poll, March 2006.



# Indiana tightens eminent domain law

Improving protection for homeowners

In 2005, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that local governments can use the process of eminent domain to take private property, such as homes and businesses, in order to hand it over to a private developer.

Indiana lawmakers immediately began working on a plan to protect the property rights of Hoosiers. Months of bipartisan work by a study committee I served on has resulted in legislation that tightens Indiana's eminent domain laws and restricts the ability of most government units to seize private property and transfer it to private entities for development.

The new legislation sets strict standards for property acquisition through eminent domain, and limits its use to only truly blighted and decaying properties. This will prevent a developer from being able to have a local government use eminent domain to seize your property simply because they think it might be a good spot for a new strip mall.

It received unanimous support, but there are still



Rep. Van Haaften debates legislation on the House floor.

potential problems that need to be addressed. Most troublesome is the fact that the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) is exempt from complying with the new restrictions.

There are concerns that INDOT will use this exemption to seize property for some of the road privatization projects proposed by the governor, such as the Interstate 69 extension or other unannounced projects in other areas of the state.

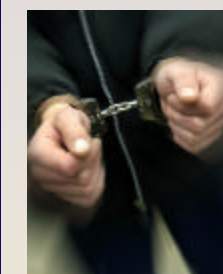
# A summary of new legislation

## FUNERAL PROTESTS



New legislation increases the penalty for disorderly conduct occurring near the location of a funeral, memorial service, or viewing. The bill is largely in response to a group from Kansas that has chosen to stage protests at the funerals of Hoosier soldiers killed in action, using the occasion to make a political statement.

## SEX OFFENDERS



A series of bills continue our state's efforts to crack down on sex offenders. The bills clarify the designation of "sexually violent predator," require sex offenders to wear GPS tracking devices, establish lifetime parole for these offenders, ban sex offenders' access to locations where children may be present, keep better track of sex offenders' whereabouts with the new DOC sex offender registry, and make the crime of human trafficking of a minor a felony.

## EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NOTIFICATION

All counties in Indiana may now set up an emergency telephone notification system to warn Hoosiers in the event of an emergency or impending disaster.

## HOME IMPROVEMENT FRAUD

The circumstances under which home improvement fraud can now be prosecuted have been expanded. The bill increases the penalties for home improvement fraud if the improvements were made on the property of a senior citizen or if more than two clauses of home improvements laws were violated.

## FIREWORKS LAWS



Indiana residents can now launch fireworks on their own property, with certain restrictions. The bill authorizes the discharge of fireworks on personal property or in specially approved fireworks discharge areas and charges a 5 percent public safety fee for the retail sale of fireworks, which will go to the Indiana

Department of Homeland Security for training programs for public safety officials.